

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 4453

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: ML, PFOR, UN, PINT

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION IN FOREIGN MINISTRY TO RADICAL POLICIES

1. DURING DISCUSSION WITH DCM AT SAUDI EMBASSY RECEPTION DECEMBER 7, MFA POLITICAL DIVISION STAFFER NOTED WITH PLEASURE RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN US-MALIAN RELATIONS SIGNALLED BY VISITS OF AF/W DIRECTOR SMITH, MALI DESK OFFICER KILLION, AND AMBASSADOR'S PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS. DCM AGREED, BUT POINTED OUT THAT SHARP POLITICAL DIFFERENCES OVER PUERTO RICO AND KOREA IN PAST HAD ENDANGERED THE RELATIONSHIP. STAFFER SAID, IN EFFECT, THAT THOSE PROBLEMS HAD BEEN CAUSED BY "OLDER" FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS WHO WERE HOLDOVERS FROM THE FORMER MODIBO KEITA REGIME. THESE PEOPLE, SAID SOURCE, THOUGHT FIRST OF IDEOLOGY AND THEIR RADICAL CAUSES AND NOT OF THE COUNTRY'S NATIONAL INTERESTS. SOURCE SAID AMBASSADOR KANTE AT UN WAS WORST EXAMPLE OF THIS TYPE. YOUNGER PEOPLE AT MFA, SAID STAFFER, THOUGHT FIRST OF NATIONAL INTERESTS AND WERE INTERESTED IN ASSESSING EXTENT TO WHICH US AND MALI COULD BE FRIENDS. DCM REPLIED THAT IF CONTENTIOUS POLITICAL ISSUES COULD BE AVOIDED--THOSE WHICH AFFECTED AMERICAN PEOPLE DIRECTLY OR OUR SECURITY INTERESTS--THEN MALIANS WOULD NOT FIND US LACKING IN CONCRETE EXPRESSIONS OF FREINDSHIP. STAFFER SAID PUERTO RICO WAS NOT MALI'S AFFAIR AND SHOULD NOT PRESENT FUTURE PROBLEMS. SOURCE ALSO SPOKE OF "CLIMATE OF COMPREHENSION" NEEDED FOR

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IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONSHIP. (THIS IS EXACT PHRASE

USED BY EMBASSY AT MINISTRY OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS;
SOURCE HAD OBVIOUSLY READ MEMCONS OF EMBASSY DEMARCHES.)

2. STAFFER ADDED THAT EMBASSY'S EFFORTS THIS YEAR AT
MFA HAD BEEN HELPFUL TO YOUNGER OFFICIALS WHO DIS-
AGREED WITH RADICAL APPROACH.

3. COMMENT: WHILE EMBASSY HAS REPORTED IN GENERAL
TERMS THE MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH OF YOUNGER MALIAN
MFA OFFICIALS, THIS IS FIRST OCCASION WHEN POINT HAS
BEEN MADE EXPLICITLY BY STAFFER WHO HAS ACCESS TO
INNER WORKINGS OF MINISTRY. INTERESTINGLY,
HE SPECIFICALLY EXEMPTED SECRETARY GENERAL SEYDOU
TRAORE FROM CRITICISM OF OLDER OFFICIALS. THAT
LEAVES ONLY KANTE AT UN AND DIRECTOR GENERAL
HALIDOU TOURE, AS WELL AS CERTAIN MALIAN AMBASSADORS
ASSIGNED ABROAD. IT WOULD SEEM THAT EMBASSY'S
DEMARCHES, INFORMATION PROGRAMS, IV GRANTS, AND
AID PROGRAMS HAVE INFLUENCED AT LEAST LOWER LEVELS OF
MALIAN OFFICIALDOM.
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